

Sandpiper Cottages – Site Plan (Cottage Subdivision)

Staff Report: Jennifer Watkins
Application #: ZA21-000074

Planning Commission Meeting Date: January 25, 2022

Applicant: Lieb Engineering
Company

Property Location: 1476 Sandpiper Ln

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

Summary of Request

The applicant requests Site Plan approval for a 5-lot Cottage Subdivision on 0.52 acres.

Existing Conditions

The property is located at 1476 Sandpiper Lane and is zoned BT-1 Low-Medium Density Tourist Business District. The development is located within 0.5 miles of the West 13th Street Public Beach Access and Lagoon Pass Park. A single family dwelling has been removed from the property. The site contains a stand of Sand Live Oaks along the street frontage. The lot is located along the Little Lagoon, and a swath of wetlands have been delineated along the waterfront.

Surrounding Context

The following are the surrounding zoning and land uses:

- **North** – Little Lagoon
- **South** – BT-1 Low-Medium Density Tourist Business District / Single Family Homes
- **East** – BT-1 / Single Family Home
- **West** – BT-1 / Sunset Condominium

Background

1476 Sandpiper Lane contains existing natural features that can enhance the proposed development. Staff worked with the applicant early in the review process in order to maintain the required 30ft wetland buffer while preserving a number of the Sand Live Oaks along the front property line.

Proposed Site Plan: 5 Lot Cottage Subdivision

Lot Size and Arrangement. The smallest proposed lot size is 1,512sf, which meets the minimum lot size requirement of 1,000sf for Cottage Subdivisions. The minimum lot width is 29.96ft, exceeding the minimum requirement of 20ft. Lot A is set back from the front Subdivision Parcel line 20.69ft, rather than the required five feet, in order to preserve some of the Sand Live Oaks along the Sandpiper Lane frontage. Lots A-D maintain a 10ft setback from the side Subdivision Parcel line in order to provide the required Class A Buffer from the abutting single family use to the east. The proposed building placement on Lot E will comply with the minimum 5ft building setback from the Subdivision Parcel along the west side property line. The setbacks on the proposed individual lots are 0ft or as indicated on the plat.

Vehicular Access and Circulation. The development proposes one entrance into the cottage subdivision from Sandpiper Lane. The 22ft private drive will be asphalt within the Sandpiper Lane right-of-way and will transition to brick pavers within the subject lot. The private drive will be maintained by the developer/Home Owners Association.

Pedestrian Access and Circulation. The private drive will include a 3ft pedestrian access way that will be delineated by a different color brick paver. The internal pedestrian access will connect the cottages to Sandpiper Lane. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan does not propose any future bicycle or pedestrian facilities at this time, therefore the applicant will pay a fee in lieu of constructing a 6ft sidewalk along the property's right-of-way frontage. The applicant has provided a cost estimate in an amount of \$2,200 for the 6ft wide sidewalk. The cost estimate has been accepted by the City Engineer.

The development proposes a raised walkway between Lots D and E that will provide access through the wetlands to a 5 slip pier. The pier is not considered a marina based on the number of slips proposed. The developer will be required to permit the pier through the U.S. Department of Army Corps of Engineers and Alabama Department of Environmental Management.

Landscaping. The applicant's Landscape Plan meets the regulations of the Zoning Ordinance, except for two requested deviations that will be detailed later in the report. A 10ft Class A Buffer (with a fence) has been provided along the east side of the development in order to buffer the Single Family Residential use from the proposed Cottage Subdivision which is classified as a Multi-family Residential use. The development proposes 36.54% common open space that includes a centrally located swimming pool and passive recreational area along the water's edge. This exceeds the minimum requirement of 20%.

The Tree Survey indicates a large number of Sand Live Oaks along the front of the property. Upon site inspection, the proposed driveway location will be removing the least desirable trees within the stand. The structure location on Lot A will require the removal of additional Oaks within the stand. The southern half of the existing tree stand will be preserved. The developer will work closely with the City Arborist during the construction phase for Lot A to determine the minimum amount of tree removal and trimming required in order to build the structure and keep tree disturbance to a minimal.

Staff worked closely with the applicant to arrive at a solution that balances wetland and tree protection. The wetlands consist of 1,533sf of fringing coastal tidal marsh which are generally located along the shoreline of the Little Lagoon. The important functions of the wetlands include wildlife habitat, nutrient cycling, and shoreline stabilization/erosion attenuation. Further preservation of the wetlands is provided by 2,571sf of wetland buffer. If all of the trees along Sandpiper Lane were to be preserved, the wetland and wetland buffer would have been impacted. Allowing some of the trees to be removed, while maintaining a 21ft deep stand of around 13 Sand Live Oaks along the property's road frontage, the wetlands and 30ft wetland buffer can remain in a natural state.

Staff supports the removal and trimming of some of the Protected Trees within the existing stand in order to preserve the 30ft wetland buffer from any structural encroachments.

Architecture. The Architecture Plan proposes two-story structures. The development provides 2 different housing units. Each structure contains 4 bedrooms. The architecture proposes windows and verandas along the facades that face Sandpiper Lane. The structure on Lot A shall incorporate louver panels along the south elevation to provide screening of the parking from the street.

Parking. Each lot provides 4 parking spaces beneath each structure; meeting the required 1 space per bedroom regulation of the Zoning Ordinance.

Grading and Drainage. The drainage design proposes to use the pervious brick paver drive and gravel base as the collection and dispersion of runoff. All runoff is to be retained in the base then percolate out. Water that falls on the rooftops will be directed to the landscaped areas. The Storm Drainage Narrative states that the stormwater runoff will not increase due to the development and the post development runoff will be contained on site. The Drainage Plan has been approved by the Engineering Department.

Lighting. The Lighting Plan proposes 8 pole-mounted lights along the private drive. The full cut-off fixtures will be mounted at 15ft. The proposed Lighting Plan meets the minimum requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.



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Waste Disposal. Roll out trash containers are provided for each unit. Trash containers will be serviced from within the development. Containers will not be allowed to be serviced from Sandpiper Lane. A service letter was provided from Republic Services stating that the company can provide services to the development.

Requested Deviations

The applicant has requested 3 deviations from the strict compliance of the Cottage Subdivision Regulations and the Landscape Regulations. The requests are as follows:

1. Reduction of the 5ft perimeter landscape buffer along the west side property line to 2ft.
2. Waive the tree and shrub plantings along the waterfront property line. This will maintain an unobstructed view to the Little Lagoon and allow the wetlands and 30ft buffer to count towards the required perimeter buffer.
3. To have the ability to obtain building permits for the structures prior to the completion of the common areas and recording of the plat so that construction can proceed simultaneously.

Staff is in support of the deviation requests.

ANALYSIS

Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan designates this area as "Residential-Medium". Residential-Medium uses are characterized by apartments, condominiums, townhouses, and single family detached housing on smaller lots. These uses are intended to be adjacent to activity centers and near the beach and Little Lagoon. This land use designation has a recommended density of 6-10 dwelling units per acre. The proposed use complies with the Future Land Use Plan.

Zoning

The property is zoned BT-1, and Cottage Subdivisions are allowed By Right within this zoning district. The development proposes 10 dwelling units per acre; this district allows a maximum of 10.5 dwelling units per acre. The Cottage Subdivision Regulations restrict building height to 2 habitable stories; while the BT-1 District allows a maximum of 5 habitable stories. The development has maximized the allowable density while maintaining the required wetland buffer and preserving native trees along the street frontage.

Plan Review

The proposed development is located within the Lagoon Pass Overlay District with similar developments along Sandpiper Lane. The Cottage Subdivision's intent is to promote multiple single family dwellings whose impacts are substantially less than the impacts of conventional multi-family development. The allowable density has been achieved while preserving the natural features of the lot, and the development supports human-scale structures at two habitable stories, as opposed to large-scale structures.

The proposed subdivision design provides a centrally located swimming pool, passive recreation space, and a 5 slip pier for the enjoyment of the owners/guests.

The Fire Marshal has reviewed and given a Phased Approval for the Site Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the Site Plan with the following conditions:

1. No trash containers will be allowed to be placed along Sandpiper Lane for servicing.
2. The Planning Commission approves the following deviations:
 - a. Deviation to Article 12-1F1 allowing a reduction of the required 5ft perimeter buffer to 2ft along the west property line.
 - b. Deviation to Article 12-1F1 allowing the applicant the ability to omit the required tree and shrub plantings along the waterfront property line; allowing the wetlands and wetland buffer to remain and count towards the required perimeter buffer.

- c. Deviation to Article 11-11J to allow the applicant to obtain building permits prior to the completion of common area infrastructure and recordation of the plat.
3. The applicant shall pay a sidewalk fee in an amount of \$2,200 prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.
4. The structure on Lot A shall incorporate louver panels along the south elevation to provide screening of the parking from the street.

ATTACHMENTS: Site Plan Set, Draft Resolution

Sandpiper Cottages – Location Map



RESOLUTION ZA21-000074

Sandpiper Cottages Cottage Subdivision Site Plan

Be it resolved by the Gulf Shores Planning Commission while in regular session on January 25, 2022; and by a vote of 0-0, hereby approves subject to the special conditions set out below and based on the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions related to the proposed 5 lot Cottage Subdivision Site Plan for Sandpiper Cottages to be located at 1476 Sandpiper Lane:

1. The Plan is consistent in all respects with the Comprehensive Plan and the purpose and intent of the applicable district.
2. The Plan is in conformance with all applicable regulations of the applicable district.
3. The Plan is in conformance in all respects with the City's Subdivision Regulations and all other applicable City requirements including design, adequacy and construction of streets, drainage, utilities and other Essential Services or facilities.
4. The Plan is consistent with good design standards in respect to all internal and external relationships, including but not limited to
 - a. Relationship to Adjacent properties;
 - b. Internal circulation, both vehicular and pedestrian;
 - c. Design of access and egress and impact on Adjacent Thoroughfares;
 - d. Disposition and use of Open Space, provision of Screening and/or Buffering, and preservation of existing natural features including trees, Wetlands, and Dunes;
 - e. Size and apparent Bulk of Structures;
 - f. Building arrangements both between Buildings in the proposed development and those on abutting sites.
5. The Plan is in conformance in all respects with City policy in respect to sufficiency of ownership, guarantees for completion of all required improvements, and, if private, the guarantee for continued maintenance.

Approval is subject to the following Special Conditions:

1. No trash containers will be allowed to be placed along Sandpiper Lane for servicing.
2. The Planning Commission approves the following deviations:
 - a. Deviation to Article 12-1F1 allowing a reduction of the required 5ft perimeter buffer to 2ft along the west property line.
 - b. Deviation to Article 12-1F1 allowing the applicant the ability to omit the required tree and shrub plantings along the waterfront property line; allowing the wetlands and wetland buffer to remain and count towards the required perimeter buffer.
 - c. Deviation to Article 11-11J to allow the applicant to obtain building permits prior to the completion of common area infrastructure and recordation of the plat.
3. The applicant shall pay a sidewalk fee in an amount of \$2,200 prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.
4. The structure on Lot A shall incorporate louver panels along the south elevation to provide screening of the parking from the street.

Be advised that before any construction activities can commence on the property, City permits must be issued prior to any construction commencing on the site. A building permit must be obtained within two years of the date of this Resolution or the Site Plan will become null and void.

This resolution shall become effective upon its adoption.

ADOPTED this 25th day of January, 2022.

Robert Steiskal, Jr.
Chairman, Planning Commission

Attest:

Mell Davis
Secretary, Planning Commission